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John Alden Museum Opens May 11

The John Alden House was built in 1627 and 1653 by cooper and dignitary of Plymouth Colony, John Alden. John and Priscilla Alden, made famous by Longfellow's poem, *The Courtship of Myles Standish*, lived in the house until their deaths some time between 1680 and 1687. The house was then inherited by their 3rd son, Jonathan and was lived in by the Alden family until 1921. The Alden Kindred of America Inc. purchased the property 1907 and in 1955 opened the house to the public.

Pilgrims John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden received a grant of land in Duxbury in 1627. They lived on the granted land during the farming season, returning to Plymouth for Sunday worship. They became permanent settlers in 1632 with the gathering of the church in Duxbury by Elder William Brewster.

The Alden's 2nd home, the house now owned and operated by the Alden Kindred of America, was built in 1653 by John and his sons. It is believed that they incorporated the frame of the first Duxbury home, a 380-square-foot structure, into what is now the kitchen, boming room, and buttery of the newer house. John and Priscilla both spent their later years here and both died in the house. The John Alden House is the only structure standing today that was built by, lived in by, and in which a *Mayflower* Pilgrim died.

Some of the interesting features of the house are the Oyster Shell Ceiling, the "camber" panels, the "gun stock" beams, the "good morning" staircase, as well as many early American Alden artifacts including a collection of 17th Century pieces found during the 1960 archaeological dig of the 1627 house.

The John Alden House offers guests a first hand look at how America changed over the first 300 years of an Anglo-Saxon settlement. The house tells a history of the United States as felt by one family over several generations. The signing of the Mayflower Compact, the American Revolution, and the Underground Railroad are just some of the important events that affected the "Old

Alden Homestead."

Visitors can start their visit to the John Alden House with a tour of the 1653 house, then stop by the gift shop, and walk to the site of the 1960 archeology dig of the 1627 summer farm house of John and Priscilla Alden. Picnicking is allowed on the grounds.

The museum's staff offers the public special programs throughout the year from school programs to bus tours. Many workshops and special tours are planned for the 96 summer season, and in the fall the museum will offer its third Autumn Festival. The festival, scheduled for Oct. 19, celebrates the 300 years of the Alden family lived in the Alden House from 1627 to 1921. Events planned range from a 1778 militia demonstration to games played in the 1850s. Many local museums will be on hand with exhibits, and music will be presented throughout the day. The 1995 Autumn Festival offered 22 events throughout the day, and this year's festival promises to be even bigger.

To begin this year's season, the John Alden House Museum will host Duxbury Days on May 11 and 12, 2 days set aside when any Duxbury resident receives free admission while visiting the museum. Also, in celebration of Mother's Day, May 12, any mother accompanied by a child will receive a free tour of the house. Admission to the John Alden House Museum is \$2.50 per adult and \$1 for children under 12.

The museum is open from 10 to 5 weekends from May 11 to June 29 and is open Tuesday - Sunday, June 25 to Labor Day. The house will be open weekends from Labor Day through Oct. 19. Due to staircase and narrow doorways the house is not handicap accessible. For more information, call 934-9092.

To get to the John Alden House from Rte.3, get off Exit 10 and head east on Rte.3A. Follow to Alden St. in Duxbury and take a right, the museum will be a quarter-mile down on the right.